
a *Grace Notes* course

History II

The Temple

Its Ministry and Services as they were at the time of Christ
by Alfred Edersheim

Lesson 19 – Chapter 19

On Vows--The Nazarite's Vow. The Offering of the First-Fruits in the Temple.

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Instructions for Completing the Lesson

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

1. Read the lesson notes carefully.
 2. Look up and study each passage of the Bible that is mentioned.
 3. Complete the answers to the QUIZ and send your response to Grace Notes. The instructions for returning the Quiz are at the end of the lesson.
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Chapter 19, On Vows--The Nazarite's Vow. The Offering of the First-Fruits in the Temple.

Vows

'If a man vow a vow unto Jehovah, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not profane his word; he shall do according to all that hath proceeded out of his mouth' (Numbers 30:2). These words establish the lawfulness of vows, define their character, and declare their inviolableness. At the outset a distinction is here made between a positive and a negative vow, an undertaking and a renunciation, a Neder and an Issar. In the former 'a man vowed a vow unto Jehovah'--that is, he consecrated unto Him some one or more persons or things, which he expressly designated; in the latter he 'swore an oath to bind his soul with a bond'--that is, he renounced the use of certain things binding himself to abstinence from them. The renunciation of the fruit of the vine would seem to place the Nazarite's vow in the class termed Issar. But, on the other hand, there was, as in the case of Samson and Samuel, also such positive dedication to the Lord, and such other provisions as seem to make the Nazarite's the vows of vows--that is, the full carrying out of the idea of a vow, alike in its positive and negative aspects--being, in fact, a voluntary and entire surrender unto Jehovah, such as, in its more general bearing, the Aaronic priesthood had been intended to express.

Man Can Only Vow His Own Things

It lies on the surface, that all vows were limited by higher obligations. A man could not have vowed anything that was not fairly his own; hence, according to the Mishnah, neither what of his fortune he owed to others, nor his widow's portion, nor yet what already of right belonged unto the Lord (Numbers 30:26-28); nor might he profane the temple by bringing to the altar the reward of sin or of unnatural crime (this is undoubtedly the meaning of the expression 'price of a dog' in Deuteronomy 23:18). Similarly, the Rabbinical law declared any vow of abstinence ipso facto invalid, if it interfered with the preservation of life or similar obligations, and it allowed divorce to a

woman if her husband's vow curtailed her liberty or her rights. On this ground it was that Christ showed the profaneness of the traditional law, which virtually sanctioned transgression of the command to honour father and mother, by pronouncing over that by which they might have been profited the magic word Corban, which dedicated it to the Temple (Mark 7:11-13). In general, the Rabbinical ordinances convey the impression, on the one hand, of a desire to limit the obligation of vows, and, on the other, of extreme strictness where a vow had really been made. Thus a vow required to have been expressly spoken; yet if the words used had been even intentionally so chosen as afterwards to open a way of escape, or were such as connected themselves with the common form of a vow, they conveyed its obligations. In all such cases goods might be distrained to secure the performance of the vow; the law, however, providing that the recusant was to be allowed to retain food for a month, a year's clothing, his beds and bedding, and, if an artisan, his necessary tools. In the case of women, a father or husband had the right to annul a vow, provided he did so immediately on hearing it (Numbers 30:3-8). All persons vowed unto the Lord had to be redeemed according to a certain scale; which, in the case of the poor, was to be so lowered as to bring it within reach of their means (Leviticus 27:2-8). *

* The Mishnah declares that this scale was only applicable, if express reference had been made to it in the vow; otherwise the price of redemption was, what the person would have fetched if sold in the market as a slave.

Such 'beasts' 'whereof men bring an offering,' went to the altar; all others, as well as any other thing dedicated, were to be valued by the priest, and might be redeemed on payment of the price, together with one-fifth additional, or else were sold for behoof of the Temple treasury (Leviticus 27:11-27). How carefully the law guarded against all profanity, or from the attempt to make merit out of what should have been the free outgoing of believing hearts, appears from Deuteronomy 23:22-24, Leviticus 27:9, 10, and such statements as Proverbs 20:25. As Scriptural instances of vows, we may mention that of Jacob (Gen 28:20), the rash vow of Jephthah (Judges 11:30,31), the

vow of Hannah (1 Samuel 1:11), the pretended vow of Absalom (2 Samuel 15:7,8), and the vows of the sailors who cast Jonah overboard (Jonah 1:16). On the other hand, it will be understood how readily, in times of religious declension, vows might be turned from their proper object to purposes contrary to the Divine mind. *

* In general the later legislation of the Rabbis was intended to discourage vows, on account of their frequent abuse (Nedar, i., iii., ix.). It was declared that only evil-doers bound themselves in this manner, while the pious gave of their own free-will. Where a vow affected the interests of others, every endeavour was to be made, to get him who had made it to seek absolution from its obligations, which might be had from one 'sage,' or from three persons, in the presence of him who had been affected by the vow. Further particulars are beyond our present scope.

Carelessness in Later Times

In the latter times of the Temple such vows, made either thoughtlessly, or from Pharisaical motives, became painfully frequent, and called forth protests on the part of those who viewed them in a more reverent and earnest spirit. Thus it is said, that the high-priest, Simeon the Just--to whom tradition ascribes so much that is good and noble--declared that he had uniformly refused, except in one instance, to partake of the trespass-offering of Nazarites, since such vows were so often made rashly, and the sacrifice was afterwards offered reluctantly, not with pious intent. A fair youth, with beautiful hair, had presented himself for such a vow, with whom the high-priest had expostulated: 'My son, what could have induced thee to destroy such splendid hair?' To which the youth replied: 'I fed my father's flock, and as I was about to draw water for it from a brook, I saw my wraith, and the evil spirit seized and would have destroyed me (probably by vanity). Then I exclaimed: Miserable fool, why boastest thou in a possession which does not belong to thee, who art so soon to be the portion of maggots and worms? By the Temple! I cut off my hair, to devote it to God.' 'Upon this,' said Simeon, 'I rose and kissed him on the forehead, saying, Oh that many in Israel were like thee! Thou hast truly, and in the

spirit of the Law, made this vow according to the will of God.'

That great abuses crept in appears even from the large numbers who took them. Thus the Talmud records that, in the days of King Jannai no fewer than 300 Nazarites presented themselves before Simeon, the son of Shetach. Moreover, a sort of traffic in good works, like that in the Romish Church before the Reformation, was carried on. It was considered meritorious to 'be at charges' for poor Nazarites, and to defray the expenses of their sacrifices. King Agrippa, on arriving at Jerusalem, seems to have done this to conciliate popular favour (Jos. Antiq. xix. 6. 1). A far holier motive than this influenced St. Paul (Acts 21:23, etc.), when, to remove the prejudices of Jewish Christians, he was 'at charges' for four poor Christian Nazarites, and joined them, as it were, in their vow by taking upon himself some of its obligations, as, indeed, he was allowed to do by the traditional law.

The Nazarite Vow

The law concerning the Nazarite vow (Numbers 6) seems to imply, that it had been an institution already existing at the time of Moses, which was only further defined and regulated by him. The name, as well as its special obligations, indicate its higher bearing. For the term Nasir is evidently derived from nazar, to separate, and 'the vow of a Nazarite' was to separate himself unto Jehovah (Numbers 6:2). Hence the Nazarite was 'holy unto Jehovah' (Numbers 6:8). In the sense of separation the term Nasir was applied to Joseph (Genesis 44:26; comp. Deuteronomy 32:16), and so the root is frequently used. But, besides separation and holiness, we have also here the idea of royal priesthood, since the word Nezer is applied to 'the holy crown upon the mitre' of the high-priest (Exodus 29:6; 34:30; Leviticus 8:9), and 'the crown of the anointing oil' (Leviticus 21:12), as also, in a secondary sense, to the royal crown (2 Samuel 1:10; 2 Kings 11:12; Zechariah 9:16). *

* The learned writer of the article 'Nazarite' in Kitto's Encycl. regards the meaning 'diadem' as the fundamental one, following in this the somewhat unsafe critical guidance of Saalschutz, Mos. Recht. p. 158. In proof, he appeals to the circumstance that the 'undressed vine' of the

Sabbatical and the Jubilee year is designated by the term 'Nazir' in Leviticus 25:5, 11. But evidently the uncut, untrimmed vine of those years derived its designation from the Nazarite with his untrimmed hair, and not vice versa. Some of the Rabbis have imagined that the vine had grown in Paradise, and that somehow the Nazarite's abstinence from its fruit was connected with the paradisiacal state, and with our fall.

We have, therefore, in the Nazarite, the three ideas of separation, holiness, and the crown of the royal priesthood, all closely connected. With this agree the threefold obligations incumbent on a Nazarite. He was to be not only a priest, but one in a higher and more intense sense, since he became such by personal consecration instead of by mere bodily descent. If the priest was to abstain from wine during his actual ministration in the sanctuary, the Nazarite must during the whole period of his vow refrain from all that belongs to the fruit of the vine, 'from the kernels even to the husk' (Num 6:3,4). a priest was to avoid all defilement from the dead, except in the case of his nearest relatives, but the Nazarite, like the high-priest (Leviticus 21:11), was to ignore in that respect even father and mother, brother and sister (Numbers 6:7). Nay more, if unwittingly he had become so defiled, the time of his vow which had already elapsed was to count for nothing; after the usual seven days purification (Numbers 19:11,12), he was to cut off his hair, which, in that case, was buried, not burnt, and on the eighth day to bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, the one for a sin-, the other for a burnt-offering, with a lamb of the first year for a trespass-offering; after which he had to commence his Nazarite vow anew. Lastly, if the high-priest wore 'the holy Nezer upon the mitre,' the Nazarite was not to cut his hair, which was 'the Nezer of his God upon his head' (Numbers 6:7). And this use of the word Nezer, as applied to the high-priest's crown, as well as to the separation unto holiness of the Nazarite, casts additional light alike upon the object of the priesthood and the character of the Nazarite vow.

The Mishnah Regulations

According to the Mishnah (tractate Nazir), all epithets of, or allusions to, the Nazarite vow, carried its obligation. Thus if one said, 'I will be it!

or, I will be a beautiful one!'--with reference to the long hair--or made any similar allusion, he had legally taken upon him the vow. If taken for an indefinite period, or without express declaration of the time, the vow lasted for thirty days, which was the shortest possible time for a Nazarite. There were, however, 'perpetual Nazarites,' the Mishnah distinguishing between an ordinary 'perpetual Nazarite' and a 'Samson-Nazarite.' Both were 'for life,' but the former was allowed occasionally to shorten his hair, after which he brought the three sacrifices. He could also be defiled by the dead, in which case he had to undergo the prescribed purification. But as Samson had not been allowed under any circumstances to poll his hair, and as he evidently had come into contact with death without afterwards undergoing any ceremonial (Judges 14:8, 15:15), so the Samson-Nazarite might neither shorten his hair, nor could he be defiled by the dead. However, practically such a question probably never arose, and the distinction was no doubt merely made to meet an exegetical necessity to the Jews,--that of vindicating the conduct of Samson! As already stated, another might undertake part or the whole of the charges of a Nazarite, and thus share in his vow. A father, but not a mother, might make a Nazarite vow for a son, while he was under the legal age of thirteen. The Mishnah (Naz. vi.) discusses at great length the three things interdicted to a Nazarite: 'defilement, cutting the hair, and whatever proceedeth from the vine.' Any wilful trespass in these respects, provided the Nazarite had been expressly warned, carried the punishment of stripes, and that for every individual act of which he had been so warned.

Rabbinical Regulations

To prevent even the accidental removal of hair, the Rabbis forbade the use of a comb (Naz. vi. 3). According to the Law, defilement from death annulled the previous time of the vow, and necessitated certain offerings. To this the Mishnah adds, that if anyhow the hair were cut, it annulled the previous time of a vow up to thirty days (the period of an indefinite vow), while it is curiously determined that the use of anything coming from the vine did not interrupt the vow. Another Rabbinical contravention of the spirit of the law

was to allow Nazarites the use of all intoxicating liquors other than what came from the vine (such as palm-wine, etc.). Lastly, the Mishnah determines that a master could not annul the Nazarite vow of his slave; and that, if he prevented him from observing it, the slave was bound to renew it on attaining his liberty. The offerings of a Nazarite on the completion of his vow are explicitly described in Numbers 6:13-21. Along with the 'ram without blemish for peace-offerings,' he had to bring 'a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil,' as well as the ordinary 'meat-offering and their drink offerings' (Numbers 6:14,15). The Rabbis explain, that the 'unleavened bread,' to accompany 'the peace-offerings,' was to be made of six-tenth deals and two-thirds of a tenth deal of flour, which were to be baked into ten unleavened cakes and ten unleavened wafers, all anointed with the fourth part of a log of oil; and that all this 'bread' was to be offered in one vessel, or 'basket.' The sin-offering was first brought, then the burnt-, and last of all the peace-offering. In the Court of the Women there was a special Nazarite's chamber. After the various sacrifices had been offered by the priest, the Nazarite retired to this chamber, where he boiled the flesh of his peace-offerings, cut off his hair, and threw it in the fire under the caldron. If he had already cut off his hair before coming to Jerusalem, he must still bring it with him, and cast it in the fire under the caldron; so that whether or not we understand Acts 18:18 as stating that Paul himself had taken a vow, he might have cut off his hair at Cenchrea (Acts 18:18), and brought it with him to Jerusalem. After that the priest waved the offering, as detailed in Numbers 6:19, 20, * and the fat was salted, and burned upon the altar.

* This part of the service was the same as at the consecration of the priests (Leviticus 8:26).

The breast, the fore-leg, the boiled shoulder, and the waved cake and wafer, belonged to the priests--the remaining bread and meat were eaten by the Nazarite. Lastly, the expression, 'besides that that his hand shall get,' after mention of the other offerings (Numbers 6:21), seems to imply that the Nazarites were also wont to bring free-will offerings.

Scripture mentions three Nazarites for life: Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist, to which Christian tradition adds the name of James the Just, 'the brother of the Lord,' who presided over the Church at Jerusalem when Paul joined in the Nazarite-offering (Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. ii. 23. 3). In this respect it is noteworthy that, among those who urged upon Paul to 'be at charges' with the four Christian Nazarites, James himself is not specially mentioned (Acts 21:20-25).

Offering the Firstfruits

Properly speaking, the offering of the firstfruits belonged to the class of religious and charitable contributions, and falls within our present scope only in so far as certain of them had to be presented in the Temple at Jerusalem. Two of these firstfruit offerings were public and national; viz. the first omer, on the second day of the Passover, and the wave-loaves at Pentecost. The other two kinds of 'firstfruits'--or Reshith, 'the first, the beginning'--were offered on the part of each family and of every individual who had possession in Israel, according to the Divine directions in Exodus 22:29; 23:19; 34:26; Numbers 15:20, 21; 18:12, 13; Deuteronomy 18:4; and Deuteronomy 26:2-11, where the ceremonial to be observed in the Sanctuary is also described. Authorities distinguish between the Biccurim (primitiva), or firstfruits offered in their natural state, and the Terumoth (primitiae), brought not as raw products, but in a prepared state,--as flour, oil, wine, etc. *

* In our Authorised Version 'Terumah' is generally rendered by 'heave-offering,' as in Exodus 29:27; Leviticus 7:14, 32, 34; Numbers 15:19; 18:8, 11; 31:41; and sometimes simply by 'offering,' as in Exodus 25:2; 30:13; 35:5; 36:3, 6; Leviticus 22:12; Numbers 5:9.

The distinction is convenient, but not strictly correct, since the Terumoth also included vegetables and garden produce (Ter. ii. 5; iii. 1; x. 5). Still less accurate is the statement of modern writers that the Greek term Protogennemata corresponds to Biccurim, and Aparchai to Terumoth, an assertion not even supported by the use of those words in the version of the Septuagint, which is so deeply tinged with traditionalism.

The Bicurim and Terumoth

Adopting, however, the distinction of the terms, for convenience sake, we find that the Bicurim (primitiva) were only to be brought while there was a national Sanctuary (Exodus 23:19; Deuteronomy 26:2; Nehemiah 10:35). Similarly, they must be the produce of the Holy Land itself, in which, according to tradition, were included the ancient territories of Og and Sihon, as well as that part of Syria which David had subjugated. On the other hand, both the tithes * and the Terumoth were also obligatory on Jews in Egypt, Babylon, Ammon, and Moab.

* The Mishnah (Bicc. i. 10) expressly mentions 'the olive-trees beyond Jordan,' although R. Jose declared that Bicurim were not brought from east of Jordan, since it was not a land flowing with milk and honey (Deut 26:15)!

The Bicurim were only presented in the Temple, and belonged to the priesthood there officiating at the time, while the Terumoth might be given to any priest in any part of the land. The Mishnah holds that, as according to Deuteronomy 8:8 only the following seven were to be regarded as the produce of the Holy Land, from them alone Bicurim were due: viz. wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. *

* The expression 'honey' in Deuteronomy 8:8 must refer to the produce of the date-palm.

If the distance of the offerer from Jerusalem was too great, the figs and grapes might be brought in a dried state.

The amount of the Bicurim was not fixed in the Divine Law, any more than of the wheat which was to be left in the corners of the fields in order to be gleaned by the poor. *

* The Mishnah enumerates five things of which the amount is not fixed in the Law (Peah, i. 1): the corners of the field for the poor; the Bicurim; the sacrifices on coming up to the feasts; pious works, on which, however, not more than one-fifth of one's property was to be spent; and the study of the Law (Joshua 1:8). Similarly, 'these are the things of which a man eats the fruit in this world, but their possession passes into the next world (literally, "the capital continueth for the next," as in this world we only enjoy the interest): to honour

father and mother, pious works, peacemaking between a man and his neighbour, and the study of the Law, which is equivalent to them all.' In Shab. 127, a, six such things are mentioned.

But according to the Rabbis in both these cases one-sixtieth was to be considered as the minimum. From Exodus 23:16 and Leviticus 23:16, 17, it was argued that the Bicurim were not to be brought to Jerusalem before Pentecost; nor yet were they to be offered later than the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple. If given at any other time than between Pentecost and the 25th Kislev, the regular service was not gone through at their presentation. Before describing this, we add a few particulars about the Terumoth. In regard to them it was said that 'a fine eye' (a liberal man) 'gives one-fortieth,' 'an evil eye' (a covetous person) 'one-sixtieth,' while the average rate of contribution--'a middling eye'--was to give one-fiftieth, or two per cent. The same proportion we may probably also set down as that of the Bicurim. Indeed, the Rabbis have derived from this the word Terumah, as it were Terei Mimeah, 'two out of a hundred.'

In the class Terumoth we may also include the Reshith or 'first of the fleece' (Deuteronomy 18:11); which, according to the Mishnah (Chol. xi. 1, 2), had to be given by every one who possessed at least five sheep, and amounted, without dust or dirt, as a minimum, to five Judean, or ten Galilean, shekel weight of pure wool (one Judean, or sacred shekel = to under two hundred and seventy-four Parisian grains); and, further, the Reshith Challah, or 'first of the dough' (Numbers 15:18-21), * which, if the dough was used for private consumption, was fixed by the Rabbis at one-twenty-fourth, if for sale at one-forty-eighth, while if it were made for non-Israelites, it was not taxed at all. The Rabbis have it that the 'first of the dough' was only due from wheat, barley, casmin, oats, and rye, but not if the dough has been made of other esculents, such as rice, etc.

* The Mishnah lays down varying rules as to the amount of the Challah in different places outside Palestine (Chal. iv. 8).

Of course, neither tithes, nor Bicurim, nor Terumoth, were to be given of what already belonged to the Lord, nor of what was not fairly the property of a person. Thus if only the trees, but

not the land in which they grew, belonged to a man, he would not give firstfruits. If proselytes, stewards, women, or slaves brought firstfruits, the regular service was not gone through, since such could not have truthfully said either one or other of these verses (Deuteronomy 26:3,10): 'I am come to the country which the Lord sware to our fathers to give us'; or, 'I have brought the firstfruits of the land which Thou, O Lord, hast given me.' According to Leviticus 19:23-25, for three years the fruits of a newly-planted tree were to remain unused, while in the fourth year they were, according to the Rabbis, to be eaten in Jerusalem.

Biccurim, Terumoth, and what was to be left in the 'corners' of the fields for the poor were always set apart before the tithing was made. If the offering of 'firstfruits' had been neglected, one-fifth was to be added when they were brought. Thus the prescribed religious contributions of every Jewish layman at the time of the second Temple were as follows: Biccurim and Terumoth, say two percent; from the 'first of the fleece,' at least five shekels' weight; from the 'first of the dough,' say four per cent; 'corners of the fields' for the poor, say two per cent; the first, or Levitical tithe, ten per cent; the second, or festival tithe, to be used at the feasts in Jerusalem, and in the third and sixth years to be the 'poor's tithe,' ten per cent; the firstling of all animals, either in kind or money-value; five shekels for every first-born son, provided he were the first child of his mother, and free of blemish; and the half-shekel of the Temple-tribute. Together, these amounted to certainly more than the fourth of the return which an agricultural population would have. And it is remarkable, that the Law seems to regard Israel as intended to be only an agricultural people--no contribution being provided for from trade or merchandise. Besides these prescribed, there were, of course, all manner of voluntary offerings, pious works, and, above all, the various sacrifices which each, according to his circumstances or piety, would bring in the Temple at Jerusalem.

Biccurim in the Temple

Having thus explained the nature of the various religious contributions, it only remains to describe the mode in which the Biccurim or 'firstfruits,' were ordinarily set apart, and the ceremonial with

which they were brought to Jerusalem, and offered in the Temple. Strictly speaking, the presentation of the firstfruits was an act of family religion. As in the first omer at the Passover, and by the Pentecostal loaves, Israel as a nation owned their God and King, so each family, and every individual separately acknowledged, by the yearly presentation of the firstfruits, a living relationship between them and God, in virtue of which they gratefully received at His hands all they had or enjoyed, and solemnly dedicated both it and themselves to the Lord. They owned Him as the Giver and real Lord of all, and themselves as the recipients of His bounty, the dependents on His blessing, and the stewards of His property. Their daily bread they would seek and receive only at His hand, use it with thanksgiving, and employ it in His service; and this, their dependence upon God, was their joyous freedom, in which Israel declared itself the redeemed people of the Lord.

As a family feast the presentation of the firstfruits would enter more than any other rite into family religion and family life. Not a child in Israel--at least of those who inhabited the Holy Land--could have been ignorant of all connected with this service, and that even though it had never been taken to the beautiful 'city of the Great King,' nor gazed with marvel and awe at the Temple of Jehovah. For scarcely had a brief Eastern spring merged into early summer, when with the first appearance of ripening fruit, whether on the ground or on trees, each household would prepare for this service. The head of the family--if we may follow the sketch in the harvest-picture of the household of the Shunammite--accompanied by his child, would go into his field and mark off certain portions from among the most promising of the crop. For only the best might be presented to the Lord, and it was set apart before it was yet ripe, the solemn dedication being, however, afterwards renewed, when it was actually cut. Thus, each time any one would go into the field, he would be reminded of the ownership of Jehovah, till the reapers cut down the golden harvest. So, also, the head of the house would go into his vineyards, his groves of broad-leaved fig-trees, of splendid pomegranates, rich olives and stately palms, and, stopping short at each best tree, carefully select what seemed the most promising

fruit, tie a rush round the stem, and say: 'Lo, these are the firstfruits.' Thus he renewed his covenant-relationship to God each year as 'the winter was past, the rain over and gone, the flowers appeared on the earth, the time of the singing of birds was come, and the voice of the turtle was heard in the land, the fig-tree put forth his green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes gave a good smell.' And as these fruits gradually ripened, the ceremonies connected first with setting them apart, and then with actually offering them, must have continued in every Israelitish household during the greater portion of the year, from early spring till winter, when the latest presentation might be made in the Temple on the 25th Kislev (corresponding to our December).

Songs of Ascent

Of course every family could not always have sent its representatives to Jerusalem. But this difficulty was provided for. It will be remembered that as the priests and the Levites, so all Israel, were divided into twenty-four courses, who were represented in the Sanctuary by the so-called 'standing men,' or 'men of the station.' This implied a corresponding division of the land into twenty-four districts or circuits. In the capital of each district assembled those who were to go up with the firstfruits to the Temple. Though all Israel were brethren, and especially at such times would have been welcomed with the warmest hospitality each home could offer, yet none might at that season avail himself of it. For they must camp at night in the open air, and not spend it in any house, lest some accidental defilement from the dead, or otherwise, might render them unfit for service, or their oblation unclean. The journey was always to be made slowly, for the pilgrimage was to be a joy and a privilege, not a toil or weariness. In the morning, as the golden sunlight tipped the mountains of Moab, the stationary man of the district, who was the leader, summoned the ranks of the procession in the words of Jeremiah 31:6: 'Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, and unto Jehovah our God.' To which the people replied, as they formed and moved onwards, in the appropriate language of Psalm 122: 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of Jehovah.' First went one who played the pipe;

then followed a sacrificial bullock, destined for a peace-offering, his horns gilt and garlanded with olive-branches; next came the multitude, some carrying the baskets with the firstfruits, others singing the Psalms, which many writers suppose to have been specially destined for that service, and hence to have been called 'the Songs of Ascent'; in our Authorised Version 'the Psalms of Degrees.' The poorer brought their gifts in wicker baskets, which afterwards belonged to the officiating priests; the richer theirs in baskets of silver or of gold, which were given to the Temple treasury. In each basket was arranged, with vine-leaves between them, first the barley, then the wheat, then the olives; next the dates, then the pomegranates, then the figs; while above them all clustered, in luscious beauty, the rich swelling grapes.

And so they passed through the length and breadth of the land, everywhere wakening the echoes of praise. As they entered the city, they sang Psalm 122:2: 'Our feet stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.' A messenger had preceded them to announce their approach, and a deputation from the Temple, consisting of priests, Levites, and treasurers, varying in numbers according to the importance of the place from which the procession came, had gone out to receive them. In the streets of Jerusalem each one came out to welcome them, with shouts of, 'Brethren of such a place' (naming it), 'ye come to peace; welcome! Ye come in peace, ye bring peace, and peace be unto you!'

As they reached the Temple Mount, each one, whatever his rank or condition, took one of the baskets on his shoulder, and they ascended, singing that appropriate hymn (Psa 150 or Psalm 150), 'Praise ye Jehovah! praise God in His sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power,' etc. As they entered the courts of the Temple itself, the Levites intoned Psalm 30: 'I will extol Thee, O Jehovah; for Thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me,' etc. Then the young pigeons and turtle-doves which hung from the baskets were presented for burnt-offerings. After that, each one, as he presented his gifts, repeated this solemn confession (Deut 26:3): 'I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come unto the country that Jehovah swore unto our fathers for to give us.' At these words, he took the

basket from his shoulder, and the priest put his hands under it and waved it, the offerer continuing: 'A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation--great, mighty, and populous.' Then reciting in the words of inspiration the narrative of the Lord's marvellous dealings, he closed with the dedicatory language of verse 10: 'And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which Thou, O Jehovah, hast given me.' So saying, he placed the basket at the side of the altar, cast himself on his face to worship, and departed. The contents of the baskets belonged to the officiating priests, and the offerers themselves were to spend the night at Jerusalem.

Note: This Psalm was not sung with all of the musical instruments which are listed. Rather, the "instruments" and the musical "sacrifice" was the fruit of the lips. The worshiper then fell on his face and worshiped. This is also true in the book of Revelation. For further comments on Psalm 149 (Psa 149) and Psalm 150 (Psa 150) for "instrumental" worship in a non-sacrificial, Christian church, outside of Jerusalem and the area of the temple.

The Word 'Firstfruits' in the New Testament

Turning from this to what may be called its higher application, under the Christian dispensation, we find that the word rendered 'firstfruits' occurs just seven times in the New Testament. These seven passages are: Romans 8:13; Romans 11:16; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 1 Corinthians 16:15; James 1:18; Revelation 14:4. If we group these texts appropriately, one sentence

of explanation may suffice in each case. First, we have (1 Corinthians 15:20,23), as the commencement of the new harvest, the Lord Jesus Himself, risen from the dead, the 'firstfruits'--the first sheaf waved before the Lord on the second Paschal day, just as Christ actually burst the bonds of death at that very time. Then, in fulfilment of the Pentecostal type of the first loaves, we read of the primal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, dispensed on the day of Pentecost. The presentation of the firstfruits is explained by its application to such instances as Romans 16:5, and 1 Corinthians 16:15 (in the former of which passages the reading should be Asia, and not Achaia), while the character of these firstfruits is shown in James 1:18. The allusion in Romans 11:16 is undoubtedly to the 'first of the dough,' and so explains an otherwise difficult passage. The apostle argues, that if God chose and set apart the fathers--if He took the first of the dough, then the whole lump (the whole people) is in reality sanctified to Him; and therefore God cannot, and 'hath not cast away His people which He foreknew.' Finally, in Revelation 14:4, the scene is transferred to heaven, where we see the full application of this symbol to the Church of the first-born. But to us all, in our labour, in our faith, and in our hope, there remain these words, pointing beyond time and the present dispensation: 'Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body' (Romans 8:23).

Quiz - Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

Respond to the questions as required.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the questions, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the file. Enter your responses in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,

- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes
% Warren Doud
1705 Aggie Lane
Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your response, we will send you the next lesson in the series.

=====

Questions on The Temple, Lesson 19

1. A man could not make a vow that obligated anything belonging to another person. [True/False]

Answer:

2. In what Old Testament scripture is discussed the idea that the scale of a vow could be lowered so as to bring it into reach of a poor person?

Answer:

3. Where is the rash vow of Jephthah described?

Answer:

4. Numbers 6 describes the _____ vow.

Answer:

5. The Nazarite was not allowed even to comb his hair, lest there be the accidental removal of some hair. [True/False]

Answer:

6. Who were the three Nazarites for Life mentioned in the Bible?

Answer:

7. The Biccurim, or presentation of the _____, was an act of family religion.

Answer:

8. In fulfillment of the type of the first loaves, the Bible speaks of the outpouring of the _____.

Answer:

9. Essay Question: Please write two or three paragraphs giving your evaluation of this course. You can write whatever ideas that occur to you, and if you like, you can include a testimony of blessings you have received while doing this study.

Answer:

10 Write your name here, as you would like to have it on your certificate. Also, please give me your mailing address again, so I can be sure to have the correct address in the Grace Notes database.

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip (Postal Code)

Country (if not USA)

The Lord bless you as you continue to do His will.

Warren

End of Quiz
